Waypoint Writers Quit After Vice's Chickenshit New Owners Delete Articles Critical Of Steam Policies

Journalism

from the *pseudo-journalistic-infotainment* dept

Thu, Jul 24th 2025 05:31am - **Karl Bode**

Last year you might recall that Vice Media suffered its final collapse after **years of mismanagement by incompetent, fail-upward brunchlords**. The new owners, Savage Ventures, quickly made it clear they were going to be even worse than past Vice management, firing a ton of talented writers and editors, and shifting Vice's focus even harder toward **engagement-chasing infotainment slop**.

So it's not particularly surprising to see a new scandal in which Savage Ventures **is being accused of randomly deleting "controversial" articles over at its gaming sub-brand Waypoint**, a decision that has resulted in most of its staff quitting in protest.

Waypoint journalists had written several articles about an Australian collective named Collective Shout. Collective Shout insists it's "a grassroots campaigning movement against the objectification of women and sexualization of girls in media, advertising, and popular culture." Its founder proclaims to be feminist, but its tactics mirror those of many evangelical censorship orgs.

The group has taken credit for several campaigns, including **banning Snoop Dog and Eminem from Australia**, and a successful push to stop Target and Kmart to **from selling Grand Theft Auto 5** in Australia. They recently took credit for Steam's removal of several sexually explicit games and new, **stricter content moderation guidelines**. PC Gamer suggests the group often **over-inflates its achievements**.

Waypoint published two articles in July about the group and its campaign against Steam: **"This Group Takes Responsibility For Steam's Payment Processor Censorship Policies-They Just Implied 'Pervert Nerds' Cause Society's Problems** and **"Group Behind Steam Censorship Policies Have Powerful Allies-And Targeted Popular Games With Outlandish Claims."**

Neither of the articles had what appear to be any errors or particularly controversial claims. Savage Ventures owners apparently just got concerned that the "controversial" nature of the pieces would hurt Google metrics and lose them money. So according to (now-ex) Waypoint writer Ana Valens, they pulled both articles offline without any real conversation with their authors:

> **Ana Valens |** (18)
> @acvalens.com
>
> VICE's owner Savage Ventures has requested the removal of my Collective Shout articles. This is due to concerns about the controversial subject matter—not journalistic complaints

This is not surprising behavior from the kind of VC opportunists that hoover up the corpses of once popular media brands, then parade those corpses around in an incoherent gambit to make a quick buck off of clickbait and shallow infotainment (see **Sports Illustrated and countless other examples**).

These kinds of folks don't care about journalism, they care about metrics. And even then they're not even particularly good at that; Vice has been less and less relevant since its 2024 final collapse, losing oceans of

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talent. Including these Waypoint authors, who **justifiably quit once their articles were deleted**. Defector suggests about 66% of the Waypoint team, including managing editor Dwayne Jenkins, **have since quit**.

The abrupt deletions of course adhere to absolutely no journalistic standards whatsoever. It's the half-assed decision by a bunch of opportunists who are interested in clicks and attention, not journalism. And while this particular scandal impacted games journalism, it's part of a broader trend toward the hollowing out of journalism, something being easily exploited by authoritarians and other bullshitters.

It's more profitable to make a quick buck striking acquisition deals and **pointless mergers for the tax breaks** — generating **badly automated clickbait and bullshit at historic scale** — than it is to pay real reporters a living wage to create actual quality journalism and interesting content. The end result of that lazy and cheap mindset is everywhere you look. And it's definitely getting worse.

Filed Under: ana valens, australia, brunchlords, censorship, journalism, media, nudity, porn, steam, video games, waypoint
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Anonymous Coward July 24, 2025 at 5:39 am

> *...a successful push to stop Target and Kmart to from selling Grand Theft Auto 5 in Australia.*

Which is highly problematic upon further examination. Yes, the game does feature the abuse of female sex workers, but if such realities are never allowed in games, then they can never have a light shone upon them so the attitudes behind them can be discussed.

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[2]

Strawb (profile) July 24, 2025 at 9:48 am

Re:

Unfortunately, moral crusaders don't care about nuance or context. It doesn't matter to them that abusing women in GTA5 is a tiny part of a massive experience, and something that is completely optional.

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BentFranklin: I met Dukakis once. I was getting a haircut in Harvard Square and I heard the door open and another barber said "Hello Governor". I thought he was doing an English bit like "hullo guv'ner" but it was actually then governor Dukakis. Governors get haircuts, who knew. After my haircut I approached him and we chatted briefly but he was doing the politician thing where they give canned answers. Not blaming him, they all do it, in this case surely because, as my young brain realized, he didn't know who I was or what I'd say about him. This tempered my expectations for interactions with politicians ever since. There's no angle in it for them to open up to a complete stranger.

aabsurdity: Sure, but don't forget they could also be being ambushed by an

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Stephen T. Stone (profile) July 24, 2025 at 6:09 am

Oh hey, it gets worse: Gaming marketplace itch.io mentioned Collective Shout by name in its announcement that, to comply with payment processor demands, it is **"deindexing" NSFW content across the entire site** and will eventually delete any such content that payment processors say shouldn't be on the site.

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[2]

Ethin Probst (profile) July 24, 2025 at 7:16 am

Re:

We really need to stop giving payment processors so much leverage and power. Seriously. They are payment processors. Their sole responsibilities/duties are to:

- Ensure money goes from point A to B;
- Ensure that people are protected from scams/malicious BS and ensuring refunds/claw-backs/chargebacks exist;

And... That's... Pretty much it.

Collapse replies (4) | Reply | View in chronology

[3]

Anonymous Coward July 24, 2025 at 8:51 am

Re: Re:

But, if the payment processors won't do business with you, you don't get your money. So, unless you can find another payment processor to do business with you, you're out of business.

That's really the only leverage and power they have, but it's a doozy.

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[4]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) July 24, 2025 at 10:21 am

Re: Re: Re:

> *if the payment processors won't do business with you, you don't get your money*

If the payment processors require censorship to do business with you, they **shouldn't** get your money—or anyone else's, for that matter.

Tuesday

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[5]

Ben (profile) July 24, 2025 at 11:11 am

INSIDER

Re: Re: Re:[2]

Ultimately it's not the payment processors (JP Morgan Chase, Worldpay, Stripe, PayPal, etc) who're the problem. It's Visa and Mastercard (and to a lesser extent Amex) who really call the shots. And they pull the puppet-strings of the processors.

If Visa and Mastercard and Amex networks won't take your requests for payment, you won't be doing business with credit cards (or debit cards) at all, regardless of what the intermediate card processors say.

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[6]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) July 24, 2025 at 4:26 pm

Re: Re: Re:[3]

Visa and Mastercard are also payment processors. My prior statement stands.

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[2]

Strawb (profile) July 24, 2025 at 9:46 am

Re:

They did their customers even dirtier than that: games that people purchased were removed as well.

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Anonymous Coward July 24, 2025 at 6:16 am

"They don't care about <product>, they care about metrics" sounds like an awful lot of higher managers I've encountered.

Plus, they didn't even understand the metrics.

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Pixelation July 24, 2025 at 7:18 am

I think we have found a place run by the next Trump FCC chairman...

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GHB (profile) July 24, 2025 at 7:46 am

INSIDER

Anti-Sexual Exploitation organizations are cancer.

I have seen youtubers reporting about Steam and Japanese art hit by this:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWp8bBd0k5c&t=63s&pp=0gcJCccJAYcqIYzv
https://www.reddit.com/r/visualnovels/comments/1caxsmc/japanese_adult_games_dev_take_on_credit_

In case if you are wondering, yes, countries like Japan does not prohibit porn content on the web. However when Artists from Japan want to create commissions, or other forms of getting paid on Skeb, Pixiv or other sites, they hit a roadblock that payment processors do not accept payments for adult content.

Japanese users are furious against unnecessary global bans against adult content.

Collective Shout is basically NCOSE in America. If anything, in countries that don't ban NSFW, websites should require login to view such content with an option for the viewer whether or not he want to see such content, without intrusive age verification, and that parents themselves (not the government) should set up parental controls against their child so they don't not only view inappropriate content, but also other dangerous things they could go to.

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Anonymous Coward July 24, 2025 at 7:56 am

Can Valve leverage their (what I must assume is quite substantial) liquidity to bypass traditional payment processors? This issue has many parallels to the root cause of SteamOS: Windows & the threats M$ were making to lock the OS down.

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Anonymous Coward July 24, 2025 at 8:08 am

Isn't it interesting.

Payment processors have the global power to censor LEGAL content.

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[2]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) July 24, 2025 at 10:01 am

Re:

I wish the U.S. government cared enough to stop it. Feels like it's a legal loophole around the First Amendment, so long as enough whiny asshole censors complain to Visa/Mastercard/PayPal.

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[3]

Mattias Estefors July 24, 2025 at 11:27 am

Re: Re:

Actually, it seems some are. There is something called the Fair Access to Banking Act that is in the works that would stop this sort of behavior from payment processors.
Whether it passes in today's corrupt political climate is another matter.

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[3]

PatrickH July 24, 2025 at 11:56 am

Re: Re:

It's not much of a loophole, the 1st Amendment only applies to government entities. Not that congress etc doesn't like try and censor through the backdoor by threatening section 230 etc. Or if you're corrupt Trump goon, hold up mergers and threaten to take away licenses and contracts etc.

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[4]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) July 24, 2025 at 4:28 pm

Re: Re: Re:

> *the 1st Amendment only applies to government entities*

If you think there aren't lawmakers who work with the groups that push for this kind of censorship, you are sorely mistaken. Hell, the whole point of those groups is to do what the government can't even while the government (or at least some people within it) support what those groups do. It's an end run around the First Amendment in the guise of stopping "fraud" or "obscenity" or whatever excuse these assholes have on hand.

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[5]

Anonymous Coward July 25, 2025 at 2:00 am

Re: Re: Re:^{2} Idea

Has someone coined the term "payment processor neutrality" yet?

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